



Royal Berkshire
NHS Foundation Trust

Advice following varicose vein surgery

Adult Day Surgery Unit

This leaflet gives advice to aid your recovery following your procedure on the Adult Day Surgery Unit (ADSU). Varicose vein surgery is usually done under general anaesthetic (you are asleep).

If you have had a general anaesthetic

- The anaesthetic drug remains in your body for up to 24 hours after your operation and over this period you may feel tired and drowsy. It is essential that you do not drive, do not operate machinery/appliances, do not sign important documents/make major decisions and have a responsible adult to look after you for at least 24 hours following your discharge from the Unit.
- Do not lock the bathroom or toilet door. Keep yourself accessible to the person looking after you.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat a light diet, avoiding alcohol.

Advice following your discharge from hospital

- **Day 1:** At the end of the operation your leg will be bandaged tightly to minimise the amount of bruising you will experience. Bruising is to be expected after this operation.
- **Day 2:** You should remove the tubi-grip and bandage and replace them with one of the green stockings you have been given. You will have to wear this stocking for around nine days.
- **Day 3:** You can remove the stocking and have a bath or shower today. Any remaining dressings should be soaked off. Replace the stocking after patting the leg dry.
- **Days 4-9:** Continue to wear the stocking when you are up and about. Remove at bedtime and when you bathe.
- Slight discomfort is normal. Occasionally, severe local twinges of pain may occur in some patients and may continue for some

months. In the first week after the operation you may need to take a mild painkiller such as paracetamol.

- Sometimes, a little blood will ooze from the wounds for the first day or two. This usually stops on its own. If necessary, press gently on the wound for 10 minutes. If bleeding continues after doing this twice, telephone your GP or the unit for advice.
- Occasionally, hard, tender lumps appear near the operation scars in the line of the removed veins. These are nothing to worry about. However, if they are accompanied by excess swelling, redness and severe pain, you may have a wound infection and you should contact your GP or the ward at once.
- Very occasionally, there is numbness around the wound or ankle. This is unavoidable and is due to pulling on the nerves during the operation. The numbness usually fades after some weeks or even months. The scars on your legs will also continue to fade over time.

Resuming normal activities

- You should resume normal activities as soon as possible. For the first week, when you sit down, you should sit with your feet elevated so that your heels are higher than your hips. This helps drainage of excess fluid from the tissues and assists healing.
- You are likely to need two weeks off work. The unit staff can advise you and can supply you with a fit note to cover your hospital stay and convalescence. Your GP can then review your health and provide further certificates if required.
- You will probably be fit to drive after one week, providing you feel alert and can do an emergency stop comfortably. Please check with your motor insurance company before you start driving again.
- Hospital follow-ups are usually not necessary. Your GP will be sent a letter after your discharge from hospital so that he/she has details of your operation and can help you with any future problems.

Will my varicose veins return?

Not every varicose vein will disappear as a result of your operation and there is a chance that in the future, further varicose veins may develop, as you are likely to be prone to them. Thread veins sometimes develop following the operation.

Doing regular exercise, avoiding becoming overweight and wearing light support tights or stockings will all help prevent you being troubled with varicose veins in the future.

During the first 24 hours following your discharge

If you have any further concerns about your surgery, please telephone the ADSU: 0118 322 7622.

Opening hours are 7.30am to 10.00pm Monday-Friday. If you need help/advice outside these hours, please telephone the Royal Berkshire Hospital switchboard on 0118 322 5111 and ask for the on-call surgery doctor.

Please note that this should be for emergencies only.

After 24 hours, please seek advice from your GP or call 111.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

ADSU, January 2025

Next review due: January 2027